

### REMARKS

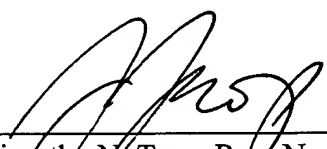
Claim 25 was restricted out following the Applicant's response to a restriction requirement in which the Applicant elected claims 13-21 and 24-30 without traverse. There never was a restriction that restricted out claim 25. Thus, it is believed that either the basis for the restriction of claim 25 is not stated on the record or the withdrawal of claim 25 was an error. Clarification is requested.

Claim 24 has been amended to call for a conductive material over and contacting the guard ring and encircling an active circuit element. As shown in Figure 1 of Farb, the guard ring 15 encircles the transistor, which apparently includes the trenches 21. In other words, trench 21 is entirely inside the guard ring 15. Since the trench 21 provides long narrow strips that "comprise source and drain regions of a transistor 10" it is clear that the transistor 10 must be inside the active area. See column 3, lines 61-63. The guard ring surrounds the active area of the transistor. See column 3, lines 58 and 59. Therefore, in Farb, no conductive material is over the guard ring, contacts the guard ring, or encircles the active circuit element.

In view of these remarks, claims 24-30 should now be in condition for allowance and the Examiner's prompt action in accordance therewith is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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